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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFRICA; NATO; IRAQ; NORTH
KOREA; ICC

AFRICA

1. "Taylor's odious exit"
The liberal Toronto Star opined (8/12): "Charles Taylor has finally been pried from power in Liberia, and that's a relief. It offers hope, however faint, for the 3.3 million people who have endured 14 blood-spattered years under his kleptocratic reign of terror first as a warlord, then as president.... Yet welcome as his ouster is, it offers no assurance that he will face a United Nations war crimes indictment. A tribunal in Sierra Leone says he bears the 'greatest responsibility' for a 10-year war there in which 70,000 died. Taylor, who denies the charge, should have been escorted from his Monrovia mansion straight into the prosecutor's arms. Instead, he quit Liberia yesterday seeking safe haven in Nigeria. If he finds it, his removal will be an odious deal, made at too high a price. Taylor was under U.N. indictment and sanctions, some American pressure, and siege by rebels who held 80 per cent of the country. His time was up. There was no need to cut a deal letting him dodge justice.... At a time when former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic is on trial for war crimes and Rwanda's prime minister Jean Kambanda has been jailed, Taylor's pain-free exit is a blow to the U.N., to the International Criminal Court and to the rule of law. Peace talks among Liberia's warring factions may yet result in a government that can put the worst days behind. That would be a mercy. But the manner of Taylor's removal exposes the international community's spinelessness in failing to bring an indicted war criminal to justice. It is a betrayal of his many victims across West Africa. And it can only encourage other lawless leaders."

NATO

2. "Putting things in order"
Under the sub-heading, "In a dangerous and unstable world, NATO finds new purpose," the nationalist Ottawa Citizen editorialized (8/12): "... The proliferation of failed, or failing states, and the terrorists incubated therein, have made NATO more necessary than ever. This renewed purpose was demonstrated yesterday when, for the first time in its 54-year existence, NATO stepped beyond the borders of Europe and assumed command of the 5,000-strong International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.... Despite the rift between the U.S. and 'old' Europe over Iraq, the alliance's 19 members recognize that the U.S. can't fight alone against fanatics trying to acquire nuclear weapons. To those who object to 'defensive imperialism,' we reply: The West will keep its armies at home when the enemy stops training suicide bombers."

IRAQ

3. "Bush called Saddam's bluff"
Editorials editor Jonathan Kay commented in the conservative National Post (8/7): "Evidence that Saddam Hussein was hiding weapons of mass destruction could theoretically emerge any day.... War supporters have to prepare themselves for the eventual admission that Iraq, as attacked, was likely WMD-free. This admission should not be particularly toxic. The legal basis for war was never that Saddam had WMDs, but that he'd flouted the many Security Council resolutions requiring him to come clean on inspections, and that he had never accounted for the WMD precursor materials we know he purchased. As for the moral justification, it is already crystal clear. Dozens of mass graves have been found, and thousands of Iraqis have come forward to tell stories of torture and unimaginable brutality under Saddam. The mere fact WMDs aren't found won't change the reality that the dictator's ouster has made the world, and Iraq in particular, a far better place.... Why would a dictator fool two major Western powers into invading his country?... [T]he Iraqi dictator kept the world guessing because he wanted to look strong in the eyes of other nations.... Simply put, Saddam sought to fool the world into thinking he still had a powerful WMD program - and he succeeded brilliantly. Even the intelligence agencies of France and Germany, whose

governments so vehemently opposed the war, believed Saddam was hiding something. Through his ruse, Saddam forced Messrs. Blair and Bush to decide between war and acceptance of the risk that Iraq's madman really was building deadly toys. Faced with this choice, and given the information they had, the two leaders correctly concluded the costs of inaction far outweighed the costs of military conflict. Thus was a just war fought and won, no matter what the victors find in the sand."

14. "What language is U.S. speaking in Iraq?" Editorial page editor emeritus Haroon Siddiqui observed in the liberal Toronto Star (8/11): "One cringes on hearing some Americans analyze non-Americans.... What planet do these Americans live on? Or are they so preoccupied spinning propaganda that they have no sense of reality? Or is it that they just don't care what anyone thinks beyond their core constituency of fellow citizens and foreign fellow travellers? So monumental has the mismanagement of post-Iraq been that essential services and law and order are still not back to pre-war levels. Looting has given way to carjacking and kidnapping. Iraqi frustrations over rampant crime have the eerie echo of women in U.S.-controlled Afghanistan who lately have been complaining that, under the Taliban, they were at least safe from rape. The Americans are operating in chaotic conditions under which many are getting killed. But they have contributed to the chaos by being ill-prepared for post-war Iraq, by being culturally clueless and trigger-happy.... The bombing of the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad Thursday had the stamp of Al Qaeda terrorism. If so, the Americans have been going after the wrong people on false assumptions and weak intelligence.... American forces have been given the benefit of the doubt because they've been facing guerrilla attacks. But their actions and, in fact, their entire approach to the occupation raise disturbing questions, summarized in what Iraqis most often ask visitors: 'How do Americans think of us, as Iraqis or as animals? Why do they treat us like cattle?'"

NORTH KOREA

15. "Next stop, North Korea?" The leading Globe and Mail opined (8/11): "Is the United States starting to prepare for war against North Korea? One might think so, considering the sabre-rattling in Washington even as the American military is fully engaged in Iraq. The latest warning came last week from James Woolsey, a former CIA director.... The prospect will strike many observers as the height of folly - how, for a start, would the U.S. expect China to react to an American invasion next door? - but in some quarters in Washington it is being taken very seriously. Mr. Woolsey, who is thought to reflect much Pentagon thinking, was an early proponent of an invasion of Iraq. That he has turned his attention to North Korea is hardly insignificant.... To what degree, however, is this merely geopolitical gamesmanship? The blunt talk is occurring when there is also tangible progress in diplomatic efforts to negotiate an end to the impasse.... The six-party talks, expected to begin this month or early in September, should clarify matters. Some form of non-aggression agreement is certain to be opposed by those in Washington who are convinced regime change is as legitimate an objective in North Korea as in Iraq. And, they point out, any deal to shut down North Korea's nuclear facilities will be only as good as the verification process. It will have to include sweeping inspections, given North Korea's history of duplicity. Still, a multilateral pact appears significantly more attainable now than just a few months ago, and would be infinitely preferable to a war that might result in a loss of life not unlike what occurred 50 years ago in the Korean War. As long as progress is being made at the negotiating table to blunt the threat from North Korea, it should be pursued with full effort."

ICC

16. "In dire need of international court" London-based independent journalist Gwynne Dyer wrote in the liberal Toronto Star (8/11): "...Current attempts to bring genocidal killers to justice around the world are scattered and stumbling. Cambodia has just announced that only the 10 most senior surviving Khmer Rouge leaders will stand trial for the slaughter of the killing fields that cost 1.7 million lives in the late '70s.... Or look at the U.S. and British attempts to remove Carla Del Ponte as chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The stated reason is because she is too busy as chief prosecutor for former Yugoslavia, but it's really about stopping her from expanding the indictments beyond

members of the former Hutu government to include members of the current Tutsi-led government of Rwanda.... If no permanent and independent body has the authority to deal with this sort of crime, then it will be politics that decides who is punished and who gets off. The International Criminal Court, which came into formal legal existence on July 1, 2002, was designed to move the world on from that primitive system. But it is under heavy assault by the current U.S. administration, which loathes the very idea of the ICC. Why? The United States says it fears that American service personnel engaged in international peacekeeping operations might become victims of nuisance prosecutions brought by the ICC, whose judges it does not control.... The ICC has become an obsession of the Bush administration, which sees all international structures that are beyond Washington's control as potentially hostile curbs on the exercise of American power. Latterly, Washington has even been cutting military aid to poor countries that refuse to sign treaties promising never to hand American personnel over to the ICC. Yet the ICC is up and running. Its 18 judges - distinguished jurists from 18 different countries - were selected last year, and chief prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo, a former prosecutor of the Argentine junta, was inaugurated in June.... It will take time for the ICC to have an impact, because it cannot deal with crimes committed before July, 2002. It will take even more time because of American attempts to sabotage it, but since U.S. hostility is driven by ideology rather than national interest, that could change as soon as the next administration. The goal is to create a single standard and a single authority for dealing with genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity when local governments are unable or unwilling to act. Ten years from now we will probably be a lot closer to that goal."

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